

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

COCHRAN, Thad (Republican)
Senior Senator from Mississippi
Elected (1978) to US Senate; reelected
Present term expires January 2009



BACKGROUND

Born: Pontotoc, Mississippi - 7 December 1937

Home: Jackson, Mississippi

Marital status: Married (Rose) - 2 children

Religion: Baptist

Education: U of Mississippi, B.A. 1959; J.D. 1965; studied international law at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland (1963-64)

Military: US Navy, 1959-61; LT (legal officer)

Profession: Attorney

Political: Exec director, MS Citizens for Nixon-Agnew, 1968; US House, 4th District, 1972-78. Succeeded the retiring Sen James Eastland (D), winning the 1978 general election with 45% of the vote against two challengers. Subsequently appointed by the Governor on 27Dec78 to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Sen Eastland. With his election in 1978, became first Republican to win an MS Senate seat in a century. Reelected in 1996 with 71% of the vote and in 2002 with 84.7%.

Sen Cochran, a conservative, is described as a tough partisan. His state of Mississippi is extremely dependent on defense and aerospace spending.

In the 108th Congress, commenting on potential base closures, remarked "I think we're fortunate in our state that most of the bases have been here a long time. They established records. They have modern facilities, and they have been rated by the military commanders as some of the best that they have anywhere in the country."

Joined several colleagues in requesting a GAO report surveying managers and personnel directors at large agencies; report concluded that agencies want more flexibility in paying, hiring, and disciplining. Following his appointment to chair the HAC Subc on Homeland Security, promised to "work hard to assess the specific needs of the Dept of Homeland Security and try to make available the funds that are needed to safeguard the security of our country and its citizens." Remarked there is "no end to the list of ways we could spend additional funds on homeland security." In remarks during consideration of the Homeland Security Appns bill, stated that the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington dramatically illustrated the need for more effective protection of our homeland. Discussed the mission of the Dept of Homeland Security. Offered an amdt to the budget resolution to make additional funds available for certain homeland security needs. Opposed Sen Leahy's amdt to provide more funding for first responders because it increased taxes by \$6B over a 6-year period and it was aimed at a small portion of the budget, increasing that account by 85%. Inserted in the Congressional Record a plan directed by the conference report on the supplemental for the development of an antimissile device for commercial aircraft. Appointed as Chmn of the Senate delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group.

Additional: Sec, Senate Rep Conf, 1984/86/88; Maj Admin Co-Chair of Senate GOP Nat'l Security Working Gp, 1999-2004

AF Bases: Columbus AFB; Keesler AFB; Reserve Forces

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS – Subc on Defense; Homeland Security - Chmn

AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY - Chmn

RULES

BOARD OF VISITORS, US NAVAL ACADEMY, 1998-2002